CRITICAL TOOLS FOR
REFLECTION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

COLLECTIVE MAPPING

DEEPENING THE UNDERSTANDING OF LAND AND TERRITORY

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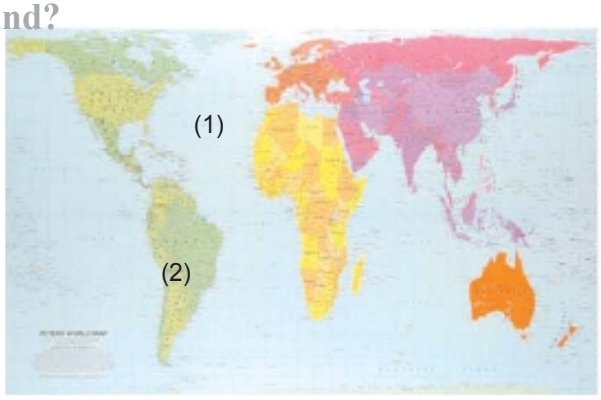
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO WORK WITH CARTOGRAPHIES?

Cartographical representations constructed by hegemonic powers privilege (by size and location) dominant forces by positioning them as privileged centers of knowledge, power, development, and production over occupied territories. In this way, an imaginary is imposed and difused where other countries are considered underdeveloped and therefore should be subordinated.

Our representations of the world are extremely important when defining a critical position in respect to it. Reflecting about our territory and forming new perceptions is essential as we organize ourselves and think through tools of social transformation.

¿South America is the same as Greenland?

Mercator Projection



Peters Projection

The World Map we see to the left is the one which usually appears in school textbooks and massively distributed atlases. It was carried out by a European over 400 years ago and had much success in colonial times, as it places europe in a central position. In this projection the size of Greenland (1) is almost the same as South America (2), but if we compare the surface occupied we see that Greenland is 2.166.086Km^2 and South America goes up to 17.819.100 Km^2, that's to say, approximately 8 times larger. Another way of representing the world gives us the geographical projection we see on the right, published for the first time in the middle of the 19th Century and much less popular in the centers of power, since it constructs surfaces closer to the actual size. These distinct forms of representation constitute a clear example of the conditioning imposed by a eurocentric view of the world.

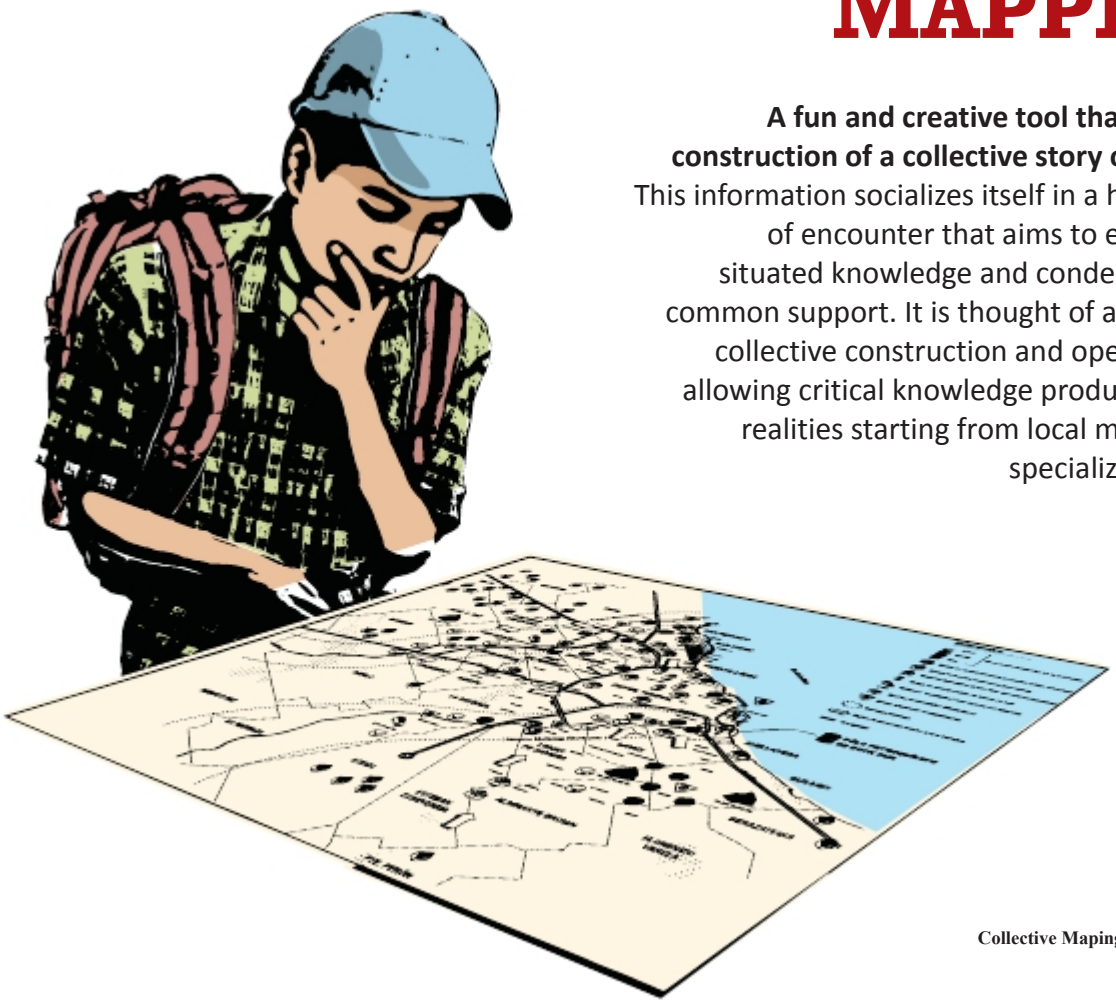
WHAT ARE THEY FOR?

Mapmaking works to sharpen the work and collective reflection when thinking about our territory. A map gives us the possibility of taking a step back, of imagining a bird's eye view that facilitates our deciphering the conections between diverse problematics with the goal of questioning and elaborating alternatives of resistence, organization, and change. The cartography is a permanently transformative process, a starting point available to be taken up by others, a platform from which to devise other activities.

WHO CAN DO IT?

Everyone can participate. Working on a map broadly understood: Can refer to an abstract representation of territory, but also a body, an institution, neighborhood, a neighborhood block. Maps can arise out of memory, future projections, of what we have and that which we need. There are infinite possibilities

WHAT IS COLLECTIVE MAPPING?



A fun and creative tool that facilitates the construction of a collective story over a territory. This information socializes itself in a horizontal space of encounter that aims to elaborate locally situated knowledge and condense them into a common support. It is thought of as an instance of collective construction and open participation, allowing critical knowledge production of diverse realities starting from local memory and non specialized knowledges.

HOW TO ORGANIZE CARTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP?

We present a series of steps to carry the process forward. You can organize it during a day, a week, or a month.

It all depends on the type of work that you are thinking through, who to carry it forward with and how much time you have. So the idea is to proceed adapting these proposals according to your necessities, thinking through the flexibility of the tool and in the local process of knowledge production. To start, work with a map poster, a guide of trigger questions, and a series of icons as initial elements that contribute and aim to motivate the participation and discussion.

1. Adress the problems which plague the area, contamination, livelihood, land, work, etc. or the thematics over which you want to work on in the process of exposing problems.

2. Create icons that identify these problematics.
We can collectively think through and utilize icons elaborated by others (weve attached the ones we have worked with).

3. Acquire a map of the region or accurately draw one
from memory, make several copies of the poster in a size large enough to facilitate the work. Organize yourself in groups of no more than 10 people and pass out the map and resources to work. (*weve attached the guide we passed out*).

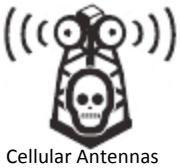
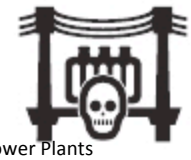
4. Point out in the map using the icons
assuring that we can make new ones, exposing themetics areas not yet considered, and inventing new forms of signposting in the form of drawings, brief texts, titles, or demarcating zones with points, lines, etc.

5. Report back from each group
showing the rest of the group what was worked on and how. This portion is very important because learning is then shared and a debate emerges from the distinct points of views put in play.

6. Sistematize the maps in one common map
generating one/some maps that condense all the information produced in the different groups and that can be complemented with images, graphics, cutouts and other resources that provide information and deepen the problematics.

From now on a fan of possibilities is unleashed. We can produce a printed map to diffuse the problematics, organize activities to continue working on the map, generate urban interventions to point out what was exposed in the map, sample presentations, etc.

Examples of Icons

Gated Communities	Real Estate Speculation	Commercial Centers	Landfills	 Cellular Antennas
 Power Plants	Gentrification	Displacement	Control	Shootings
Migrants	Contaminated Water	Soy	Agribusiness	Forest monoculture
Toxic Spraying	Open Pit Mine	Toxic Factories	Foreign owned land	Oil
Destruction of forests	Fishing Predation	Toxic Contamination	Deforestation	Land Conflicts
Recovered Factories	Assemblies	Teacher Struggle	Peasant Movement	Resistance
Native Peoples	Landfills	Apathy	Predator Tourism	Human Trafficking

Examples of Trigger questions

As a guide: In your hands is a map and a series of icons that can be utilized as a reference that generated by trigger questions. This is an open proposal intended as a reflection and action strategy so that we can generate, create, and invent new icons or themes not originally thought of, while inventing new reference points such as drawings, short texts, titles, or demarcate areas with dots, stripes, etc. We propose an observable indication of flows present throughout the community, (capital, people, work, etc…) especially those considered interesting and those which stand out because of their conflictiveness or the tension they bring, this can be done by utilizing arrows or other indicators. In general, but not excusively, this is a map of conflict and resistance so it is also interesting to identify the characters and reference them with icons and names.

Urban Problematics

•Where are the high income/private neighborhoods located?

•Where are the gentrified zones located, that is, zones where local habitants were displaced in order to make room for speculative real estate?

•Where are commercial centers located? (Shopping, walking, etc.)

• where do marches and protests converge?

• Where are phone masts? What PCB transformers?

• What are the most contaminated sites? Where are the landfills?

• Where is the heart of power? (Government, legislature, police, etc.).

• is there water pollution? If so where?

• How and where does agribusiness expand? (Agrofuels, oil, grain, etc.). Where is there spraying of toxic herbicides?

• What system do waste pickers utilize?

• What are the areas with most surveillance ?(police, cameras, etc…)

• Where are there more cases of shootings?

• What neighborhoods do migrants settle in? Where do they come from? (Internal / external)

• how far do networks stretch?

• Where/how do we situate resistance? (Mov. socialassemblies, labor struggles, etc.).

• What areas have problems with public transportation? Which areas are absent of public transport?

Rural Problematics

• What areas are patrolled by police or public private security guards?

• Where has there been murders of social activists? And/or is protest criminalized?

• where are there evictions and/or foreclosures?

• Where are the paper / pulp mills? Who are the owners?

• How far do peoples networks stretch?

• where do agribusiness locations expand? (Agrofuels, oil, grain) And where does the spraying of toxic herbicides take place?

• Where is resistance situated? Observed? Invisible? (Social movements, assemblies, labor struggles, etc.).

• What are the most polluted areas? Neighborhoods? Where does this issue take root?

• Where there are cases of shootings?

• Where are the private ports?

• What are the areas of oil exploitation?

• is there land occupations, if so, where?

• In which areas do migrants settle? If they do, from where do they come from? (Internal / external)

• Where are monocultures cultivated, Genetically Modified corn? Soy?

• What areas have been flooded ? which suffer drought?

• What regions have suffered an exodus of its inhabitants to the city?

• What are the areas of clearing and deforestation?

Iconoclasistas

Communication and Resource Laboratory for Counterhegemonics

From the graphics and research to the generated questions and the simbolic hegemony and ideology, we intended to develop strategies for resistance mediated by a creative work liberated from limits imposed by the privatization of knowledge.

www.iconoclasistas.com.ar /
iconoclasistas@gmail.com /
cosmovisionrebelde.blogspot.com

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